

IMA-EURO Churchgoers Donate to Fisher House Christine June, USAG Kaiserslautern Public Affairs



A donation of \$81, 357.77 from Installation Management Agency-Europe chapels is presented Landstuhl Regional Medical Center Fisher Houses during a July 14 ceremony. Pictured (from left) are IMA-EURO Chaplain Col. James May; IMA-EURO Region Director Russell B. Hall; Fisher House Manager Kathy Gregory; and Management and Program Analyst Kermit Powers. Gregory said this donation was almost half of her annual fundraising goal for the two Fisher Houses. Congregations throughout IMA's European region raised the money during May and June.

Photo by Christine June

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany -- Churchgoers from more than 50 Installation Management Agency-Europe garrison chapels have reached deep into their hearts – and pockets – to donate more than \$81,000 to Landstuhl Fisher Houses.

The funds were raised in a two month period of “designated giving” organized by IMA-EURO chaplains. For the two Fisher Houses at Landstuhl Army Regional Medical Center, the contribution is dramatic.

"This is almost half of our annual donation goal," said Kathy Gregory, Landstuhl Fisher House manager. Gregory said “every cent” of the IMA-EURO chapel donation will be used to make Fisher House a "home away from home" for service members' families who are visiting someone in the hospital.

The yearly budget for both Landstuhl Fisher Houses is \$230,000. Of that amount, approximately \$170,000 is their donation goal. "To receive a check of more than \$80,000 is just huge," said Gregory.

At the ceremony, IMA-EURO Regional Director Russell B. Hall noted that, "The donation today comes from the heart, and from so many of the families throughout our communities." Hall was joined at the July 14 presentation by IMA-EURO Chaplain (Col.) James May.

Landstuhl Fisher House I and II are less than a five-minute walk from LRMC, the largest American hospital outside the United States. The first Fisher House, with eight rooms, opened in 2001; the second one, with 11 rooms, opened the following year.

Gregory said Fisher House I and II have hosted more than 1,000 families thus far this year -- more than 100 families a month. In 2005, the facilities hosted 957 families.

After the check presentation, the IMA-EURO Region Director and other officials met with four members of an Indiana family who were visiting Pfc. Stephen Beesen, a 10th Mountain Division soldier wounded in Afghanistan in early July. The patient was sedated to help control the pain. "Until he heard our voices," said Stephen's mother Kay, "he thought he had been captured."

Beesen's mother feels it is important for her son's recovery to have family members nearby. "There has been a Beeson with him 24-7 since we arrived -- Fisher House made that possible."